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SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA, STATE - USAID HUMANITARIAN
CABLE UPDATE NUMBER 8

REF: A) STATE 27057; B) NAIROBI 02414

This is the last update cable in response to Ref A request for bi-weekly reports on the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa. USAID Missions in Kenya and Ethiopia, USAID/East Africa (Somalia, Djibouti), and OFDA/ECARO contributed to this report.

In the future, USAID/EA plans to issue quarterly reports on Famine Prevention Fund activities and periodic reports on the regional eastern and central Africa (ECA) food security situation, which will include the Horn of Africa.

REGIONAL SUMMARY

1. FEWSNET continues to classify the Horn of Africa pastoralist zones as an emergency, despite the improved performance of the long rains compared to the 2005 failed seasons. Although key pastoral environmental indicators such as the availability of water, pasture and browse have improved in the short term, livelihood

recovery will take years. In Kenya, livestock and livelihood recovery due to the 3 - 6 failed seasons will be slow. Food insecurity in Northwest Kenya is currently particularly acute. In Ethiopia, the southern zones of the Somali region remain the most food insecure of the country and facing continued crisis due to spotty rains and conflict. In southern Somalia, civil insecurity and conflict remains the biggest uncertainty. Crops did not perform well in Gedo, Juba valley and Bakol regions, and malnutrition rates remain high at 20 percent. In Djibouti, the dry lean season and scorching summer heat has dried out meager pasture lands. Deep wells and water trucking are the only sources of water in most parts of pastoral livelihood zones.

COUNTRY REPORTS

12. KENYA

UPDATE ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES AND DONOR RESPONSE:
A multi-agency long rains assessment is underway and will be completed on August 12, 2006. The assessment covers 27 Arid and Semi Arid Lands districts. The final assessment report is expected to be available around the end of August.

On food aid, a cereals pipeline break is expected in September. The latest unconfirmed pledge towards the WFP-led EMOP is 7,400 MT of Rice from the Japanese Government. The USG is working towards another contribution of 14,000 MT in assorted commodities

including cereals valued at approximately \$9.9 million to reduce the pipeline gap bound to occur beyond September.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK:
The 2006 long rains have ended in most areas of the country. In the high potential cropping areas of the Rift Valley and Western Provinces rainfall is expected to continue through August and into early September. In spite of the good rains, household food security remains precarious in the drought-affected pastoral, arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya. In addition, milk availability is limited since livestock herds have only just begun to recover from high mortality and the extremely poor conditions during the dry season that have resulted in a very low proportion of animals lactating. As a result, malnutrition rates in many of these areas have shown little improvement. FEWSNET reports that substantial losses of livestock between November and March have severely eroded the productive asset base of pastoralists. Due to the extent of livestock losses, most drought-affected households are forced to rely on relief food aid. Recovery for drought affected households will require substantial rebuilding of herds, a process likely to take several good seasons, which have become increasingly rare.

13. ETHIOPIA

UPDATE ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES AND DONOR RESPONSE:
USAID/OFDA continues to respond to humanitarian needs resulting from the regional drought. In July, USAID/OFDA teams traveled to Oromiya and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) regions to assess humanitarian conditions and monitor ongoing USAID/OFDA-funded programs. The recent rainy season was beneficial for water, pasture, and browse, resulting in improved conditions for agriculture and livestock. However, as the upcoming dry season approaches conditions are likely to deteriorate.

On July 24, the USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor (RA) for the Horn of Africa arrived in Addis Ababa for a ten day

visit. The RA met with partners to discuss the progress, including successes and challenges, of community-based therapeutic care (CTC) programs in the country.

According to Oromiya Region health officials, more than 5,000 cases of acute watery diarrhea were identified in health facilities in West Arsi Zone, Oromiya Region since late June. Health clinics have reported at least 33 related deaths; however, an unknown number of people may have died without seeking treatment. Ministry of Health, U.N. agencies, and NGOs have mobilized teams to respond to the outbreak. USAID/OFDA partner Population Services International (PSI) is providing point-of-contact water treatment products and training to

woreda-level health officials.

The recent acute watery diarrhea outbreak in West Arsi Zone, Oromiya Region is reportedly resulting in increased needs for food assistance for affected populations. Food security in the region is worrisome due to poor rain performance in some lowland areas of East and West Harerge zones. Following the deterioration of the food security situation, the region has requested food allocations from the DPPA.

As of August 7, USAID/OFDA has programmed nearly USD 14 million, primarily through grants to eleven partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs), U.N. Children's Fund, and U.N. World Food Program.

As for food aid, WFP has yet to receive beneficiary numbers from the DPPA for the second half of 2006. As a result, WFP remains unable to concretely report on the pipeline outlook. In the best case scenario with 1.5 million people needing emergency food assistance, the cereal pipeline will break in December and require an additional 10,000 metric tons (MT). In the worst case scenario with 3.0 million beneficiaries, the cereal pipeline will break in September and the total shortfall would be 177,000 MT. WFP will revise these estimates once the DPPA releases the final beneficiary numbers.

Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative Update: Most drought response programs have wound down in the PLI as a result of rains through much of the drought affected areas. Pastoralists have discontinued emergency sale of livestock, although healthy livestock markets reinforced by market linkages through PLI have resulted in continued high prices and good levels of sales for livestock headed northwards to the Awash/Addis markets. Maintenance of breeding herds and emergency health interventions have also wound down for the moment, but because of insufficient rains in many of the affected areas, particularly in Eastern Somali Region, these may have to re-start before long. Conflict and heavy security presence have limited the activities of PLI partners in the southern parts of Somali region, especially the more drought affected areas of Gode, Deghabur, and Korahe Zones in Somali Region.

Although reasonably good rains in most drought-affected areas in southern Ethiopia were received in April, subsequent rains have been spotty and there remain many areas that did not receive sufficient rain to see them through to the next rainy season. Essential nutrition, water and other responses are underway, including an assessment of a recent outbreak of acute watery diarrhea. In addition, other pastoralist and agricultural areas not affected by the earlier drought are now facing drought conditions, mainly in pockets in Afar and northern Somali regions, as well as parts of East Harerge Zone in Oromiya Region and Amhara Region.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK:

On July 20, the Government of Ethiopia's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) sponsored a debriefing session for the mid-year multi-agency

emergency assessment. Joint teams assessed conditions in six regions during a three-week period from mid-June to early July. According to the assessment teams, the overall prospect of the belg rains and crop production is rated as promising, except in some pocket areas in parts of Amhara and eastern Oromiya regions. The DPPA is currently reviewing the assessment results and the associated recommendations for beneficiary numbers. As a result, official updates on revised beneficiary numbers for the period of August to December are yet to be released from the federal government.

Conflict worsened conditions and made the response more difficult. A serious conflict between the Borena and the Guji in Oromiya Region resulted in a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and temporarily disrupted access to a number of areas. Heavy security presence in Somali Region as well as pockets of fighting has disrupted emergency activities and food aid was only seven percent of the planned totals for June.

¶4. SOMALIA

UPDATE ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES AND DONOR RESPONSE: WFP is beginning a new two year Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) on August 1, 2006. The operation is expected to assist 2.1 million beneficiaries with 170,686 MTs of food commodities costing US \$124 million. The food will be targeted towards relief distributions (125,000 MTs); Food for Work/Food for Training (28,000 MTs); Mother-Child Health (11,000 MTs); Social Support to orphans, elderly, and chronically ill (3,000 MTs); and school feeding (3,000 MTs). WFP has already received 10 percent of the total amount (\$13.2 million) from over ten donors with the largest contributors being the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia. USAID is in the process of making its first contribution to this new operation. WFP's pipeline is full through the end of 2006 for pulses, oils, and fortified corn-soya blend (CSB) but faces shortages in cereals beginning in October. The pipeline gap in cereals for 2006 is 37,206 and should be mostly resourced with USAID/Food for Peace's pending contribution.

Early indications from USAID partners indicate that the impact of the Union of Islamic Courts takeover has been a decrease in roadblocks reducing the cost and time for humanitarian shipments as well as a reduction in sea piracy.

To date, USAID/OFDA has programmed nearly 6 million USD in humanitarian assistance, focusing on water, sanitation, health, nutrition and livelihood sectors in the high risk regions of Gedo, Bay, Bakool, Lower and

Middle Juba.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK: FEWSNET and the FSAU estimate that over 2 million people continue to face either a livelihood crisis or a humanitarian emergency. The overall performance of the 2006 March-May gu (main) season in terms of crop production and rangeland condition was below normal. However, preliminary reports indicate a harvest at 71% of post-war average yields, and the number of drought-affected people anticipated to need humanitarian assistance should drop from 1.7 million to 1.3 million. The livestock sector is confronted with poor lactating and calving rates, increasing the overall poor nutrition, and cereal market prices are at their highest levels in over six years.

¶5. DJIBOUTI

UPDATE ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES AND DONOR RESPONSE: According to FEWSNET reports pastoralists in all rural livelihood zones entered a lean period from June-August during which their food security situation is precarious, and WFP led EMOP is assisting them in filling the food gaps. WFP is distributing 800 MT per

month for 5 drought affected districts in rural Djibouti and targets 47,500 beneficiaries for general distribution and supplementary feeding. The program was to end on 15 September but WFP submitted a budget revision and will now end in December 2006. The budget revision included an additional one month buffer stock of 20,000 rations to cope with the current increase in population movements. For the PRRO (for Somali refugees), WFP has just closed Holl Holl camp, leaving one camp - Ali Ade - for 10,000 remaining refugees (down from 17,260 refugees in March 2005, who have been repatriated to northern Somalia). WFP plans to repatriate 6,000 more leaving 4,000 refugees by December 2006. The USG is a major contributor to WFP's PRRO and EMOP at 3,210MT valued at \$2 million. The other donors to WFP are Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and Canada.

OFDA has provided \$200,000 to UNICEF Djibouti to implement a therapeutic feeding program in Djibouti city. This includes training of local health workers, community mobilization, provision of therapeutic food and working with the Ministry of Health to develop nutrition guidelines and policies related to supplemental and therapeutic feeding programs.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK:
June-August are the hottest months in Djibouti and natural resources (water, pasture and browse) become scarce in all pastoral zones as a result of the start of the dry season. Deep wells and water trucking are the sole sources of water in most parts of pastoral livelihood zones. Browsing animals (goats and camels) are better equipped to survive these conditions than grazing animals (cattle and sheep), which depend on

increasingly depleted pasture. In the southeast pastoral livelihood zones, the number of lactating goats is expected to be limited in the coming milking period (August to October), leading to reduced milk production. Minimum food or income can be derived from herds under these conditions, and the risk of food deficits in pastoral areas is further heightened by the reduction of remittances in response to the higher cost of staple food prices in urban areas.

Many people migrate out of the city to escape the heat in the dry hot months of June-August, and urban migrations have an effect on petty trade, an activity practiced by poor households thus reducing their purchasing power, and further reduces the remittances to the pastoral areas due to the high cost of staple food prices in urban areas. The decline in the income of the urban poor contributes to low dietary intake and consequently higher malnutrition rates. UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Health have recently opened 10 supplementary feeding centers inside Djibouti City and the program is planned to be extended further to other districts within the territory of Djibouti.

REGIONAL RAINFALL FORECAST

16. According to IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Center (ICPAC), the 2005 - 2006 drought in the Horn of Africa saw some of the driest conditions recorded since 1961. Then, in early March 2006, the normal rainy season was preceded again by abnormal weather -- this time, unusual wet conditions in western Kenya due to a tropical cyclone over the southwest Indian Ocean, followed by a three-week dry period. The rainy season that followed during late March to May was poorly distributed and not sufficient to begin a recovery period from the drought particularly in the most severe drought areas of northeast Kenya, southeast Ethiopia, and Southern

Somalia. The ICPAC consensus outlook for June - September 2006 forecasts average rainfall across the region -- although ?average? needs to be caveated since these months are not the rainy season in the pastoral zone. Although isolated showers have improved pasturelands and crops that were planted late, overall below normal vegetation conditions are seen in many of the pastoral areas. The October ? December rains, which are normally lighter than the spring rains, will be critical if an even more severe emergency crisis is to be avoided in the first half of 2007.

HOOVER